acteristics 16nd so little to my taste. This, as I am well aware, is a minority position (though not, perhaps, quite so small a minority as might be supposed), which would make the central figure of the Forties as derisory as the comparable one of the Thirties—Ramsay MacDonald. As I indicate in *The Thirties,* MacDonald's efforts to promote 'the peace of the worrrld' soon came to seem merely ridiculous, leading, as they did, to Neville Chamberlain's sorry and disastrous transactions at Munich. Yet both his and Chamberlain's performances, surely, pale into insignificance compared with Churchill's at Yalta, when he and the dying Roosevelt, in effect, handed over Eastern and Central Europe to the most untender mercies of Stalin, the third man of the ribald triumvirate. Such inclination as I had to expatiate, in detail and at length, upon all this, in any case expired when I read the late Chester Wdmot's masterly *The Struggle for Europe.* With an erudition and historical grasp which I could not hope to emulate, and a patience and persuasiveness quite beyond my capacity, he shows how the ostensible champions of our civilisa-tion themselves blew the trumpets which brought its already tottering walls crashing down.

Even so, it seems reasonable, now that *The Thirties* is being reissued some quarter of a century after its first appearance, to consider how far its general account of our times has stood up to what has actually happened. Here, one must make a corrective, in a way that conies more easily to the old than to the young, for the pky of one's own natural, but not necessarily well-founded, predilections. I have always felt

myself, perhaps to an abnormal degree, a stranger in a strange world. In my earliest recollections of life (actually, of walking down a suburban street in someone else's hat) I was consciously a dispkced person —an expression which, doubtlesSffor that very reason, has always filled me with a mixture of rage and heartache; of rage that it should ever have been devised, and of heartache that it should ever have been required.

This sense of being a stranger in a strange land induced the related feeling that the whole life of action, one's own and